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THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN  
IN THE LATE ANTIQUE AND  
EARLY BYZANTINE PERIODS

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*Cover:* Detail of a map by Nicolas Sanson D'Abbeville, Paris 1665. Finnish Institute at Athens

# Contents

Preface		i
LÁSZLÓ BORHY	Ewige Zeit – Ewiges Leben: Das Deckengemälde aus <i>Brigetio</i> und das kosmologische Zimmer des Cosmas Indicopleustes	1
SEPPO HEIKKINEN	The Poetry of Venantius Fortunatus: The Twilight of Roman Metre	17
GUNNAR AF HÄLLSTRÖM	From Chaos to Cosmos – Interpreting the Hierarchies of Pseudo-Dionysius	33
STEFANIE A.H. KENNEL	Latin Bishops and Greek Emperors: Ennodius' Missions to Constantinople	41
GEORGIOS PALLIS	The Early Christian Attica: the Area of Maroussi	59
IOANNIS VOLANAKIS	Frühchristliche Monumente auf der Insel Rhodos – ein Überblick	75
List of Figures		95

# The Early Christian Attica: the Area of Maroussi

Georgios Pallis

The existence of Early Christian architectural sculpture and members in the Athenian suburb of Maroussi provides the inspiration for the present paper.\* Knowledge of Early Christian Athens has progressed during recent years, thanks to scholarly publications and to extensive excavations during public works.<sup>1</sup> There are also some important finds from and studies of the countryside of Attica, which give an interesting impression of the region.<sup>2</sup> We know very little about the Athenian plain and life at the local demes during this period of transition from paganism to Christianity, but the study of Maroussi, ancient Amarysia, located in the deme of Athmonon, may throw some light on the matter.

## Maroussi-Amarysia in the Roman era

The suburb of Maroussi is located 12 km northeast of Athens (Fig. 14). Its name derives from the cult of Artemis Amarysia, the local deity of the ancient deme of Athmonon.<sup>3</sup> As the frequent references to citizens of Athmonon in the contemporary Attic inscriptions suggest, the deme was inhabited continuously during the Roman period. It also seems that the deme was favoured by Herodes Atticus, who had a great villa in the neighbouring deme of Kephisia in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD. Two archaistic boundary stones of the temenos of Amarysia,<sup>4</sup> which have been dated to the same period and give some evidence of renovation activities in the sanctuary, may possibly be attributed to him.<sup>5</sup> The history of the area during the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, when Attica was affected by the Herulian raid, is virtually unknown.

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\* I would like to thank the 1<sup>st</sup> Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities for permission to publish the Early Christian material from Maroussi. I also thank E. Eleutheriou for her kind help during the preparation of this paper.

<sup>1</sup> A. Frantz, *Late Antiquity: A.D. 267 - 700*. The Athenian Agora XXIV, Princeton 1988; D. Pallas, Η Αθήνα στα χρόνια της μετάβασης από την αρχαία λατρεία στη χριστιανική. Τα αρχαιολογικά δεδομένα, *Επιστημονική Επετηρίς Θεολογικής Σχολής Πανεπιστημίου Αθηνών* 28 (1989) 851-930; P. Castrén (ed.), *Post-Herulian Athens*. PMFIA 1, Helsinki 1994; L. Parlama and N. Chr. Stambolidis (eds.), *The City Beneath the City. Antiquities from the Metropolitan Railway Excavations*, Athens 2000, 121-122, 135-136, 158-161 and 192-194.

<sup>2</sup> Pallas 1986, 43-80; E. Gini-Tsofopoulou, *AD* 45 (1990) B' 1, 92-93, plans 6-7, pl. 41στ-42α; E. Chalkia, Η Λαυρεωτική κατά την Παλαιοχριστιανική εποχή: μερικά νέα ευρήματα, *IB' Συμπόσιο XAE* (1992) *Περίληψεις*, 60-61; E. Gini-Tsofopoulou, *AD* 49 (1994) μ'1, 106-107, plan 11, pl. 46Α; E. Gini-Tsofopoulou, *AD* 50 (1995) μ'1, 71-73, σχ. 2-3, pl. 31-32; E. Gini-Tsofopoulou, *Βυζαντινό Μουσείο. Τα νέα αποκτήματα* (1986 - 1996), Αθήνα 1997, 164-169; E. Gini-Tsofopoulou, *Παλαιοχριστιανική και πρωτοβυζαντινή περίοδος (4ος-8ος). Μεσογασία. Ιστορία και Πολιτισμός των Μεσογείων Αττικής*, Αθήνα 2000, 150-165.

<sup>3</sup> Paus. 1, 14, 7; J. Traill, *The Political Organization of Attica*, Hesperia Suppl. XIV, Princeton 1975, 50; Pikoulas 1992-1998, 205-214.

<sup>4</sup> *IG* 1<sup>2</sup> 865a - b.

<sup>5</sup> H.G. Lolling, *Neuer Grenzstein der Artemis Amarysia*, *MDAI(A)* 5 (1880) 289-291; M.K. Langdon, *Επίμετρον II*, in Pikoulas 1992-1998, 212-213.





## Amarsysia in the Early Christian period

There are many difficulties in studying the life of Amarsysia in the Early Christian period, as it is not mentioned in the contemporary written sources. Moreover, the epigraphic testimony is very poor with only two sepulchral inscriptions of local origin.<sup>6</sup> The first, of Ἑρμῆ καὶ Φιλίνας (*IG* III 3519 = *EM* 9945; Fig. 15) was found, reused, at the chapel of Agios Nikolaos on Pelikas hill. Erkki Sironen dates the inscription to the 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>7</sup> There is no distinguishing feature from which this gravestone may be attributed to Christians or pagans. The careless shape of the letters and the erroneous use of the genitive Ἑρμῆ instead of Ἑρμοῦ could perhaps indicate

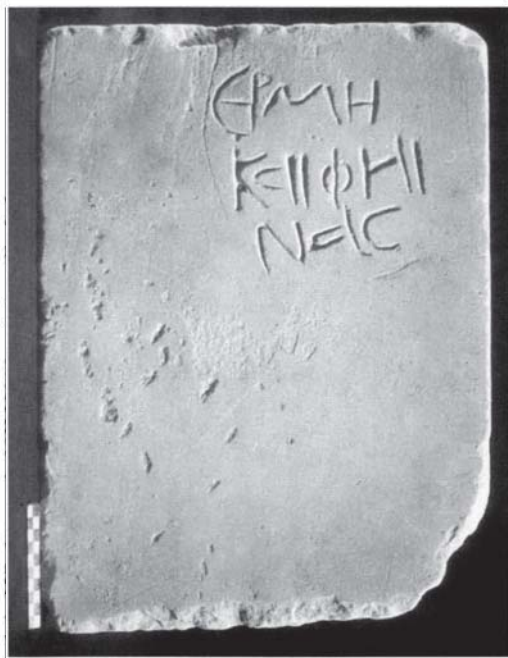


Fig. 15. *EM* 9945.

the decline of language among the rural population.<sup>8</sup> In addition, the inscription was found just a few metres from the site of the sanctuary of Artemis Amarsysia, later occupied by the chapel of Agios Ioannis Pelikas,<sup>9</sup> which shows that burials occurred close to the site of the most important local pagan sanctuary.

The second inscription, the epitaph of the deaconess Εὐφροσύνη, is published by Erkki Sironen<sup>10</sup> on the basis of a squeeze made by Werner Peek. The stone, originally at the church of Agioi Anargyroi (formerly Panagia Marmariotissa), has been lost. In this case, the deceased was not only a Christian, but had served the church as a deaconess. The short text, with a curse against possible grave robbers, supplies two errors that reaffirm the modest level of the

language. The grave is mentioned as τάφος, which is an unusual term in this early period. According to Erkki Sironen, Εὐφροσύνη is one of only two known deaconesses in Attica. He dates this inscription also to the 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> century.

Since modern Maroussi has been completely overbuilt without constant archaeological supervision, much archaeological evidence and documentation is missing. Recent excavations, during construction of some parts of the new highway (Attiki Odos) and the Olympic Stadium complex, did not provide any finds dated to

<sup>6</sup> An Early Christian inscription was recently (autumn 2003) found at the excavation of a post-Byzantine chapel by the 1<sup>st</sup> Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities, not very far from Nerantziotissa, but it is as yet unpublished.

<sup>7</sup> Sironen 1997, 223–224, n. 177.

<sup>8</sup> See inscriptions from northeastern Attica in Pallas 1986, 44.

<sup>9</sup> For the location of the sanctuary at this site, see Pikoulas 1992–1998, 205–211.

<sup>10</sup> Sironen 1997, 235.

the Early Christian period.<sup>11</sup> The architectural sculpture and members reused as spolia in later monuments comprise the most important evidence from this period. Their number, and the fact that they are found gathered in and around three post-Byzantine churches, presents an opportunity to examine the topography of the area in the Early Christian period.

### The spolia from Panagia Marmariotissa (Agioi Anargyroi)

The first monument which once preserved Early Christian material, was the church of Panagia Marmariotissa, later Agioi Anargyroi, a 16<sup>th</sup>-century, three-aisled basilica.<sup>12</sup> It was situated close to Pelikas, to the northeast of the hill, possibly on an ancient site. The name Marmariotissa reflects the existence of numerous marble members reused in the masonry of the church or lying around. Among them was the aforementioned sepulchral inscription of the deaconess Εὐφροσύνη.



Fig. 16. Panagia Marmariotissa: Columns in the courtyard.

Some of the spolia saved after the demolition of Marmariotissa in 1973 can be dated to the Early Christian period. Two unfluted monolithic columns (Fig. 16) of the same whitish veined marble and of almost identical dimensions, lie today in the courtyard of the modern church. These columns, clearly of the same workshop, were unfortunately broken a few years ago. In 1998, the intact one had a height of 2.68 m, and the other, at that time in two fragments, measured 2.62 m.<sup>13</sup> Apophyges are found on both upper and lower parts of each column. The veining of the marble gives a decorative impression much favoured in this period.<sup>14</sup> Both columns seem to come from the same edifice.

<sup>11</sup> According to information provided by archaeologists of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, involved in these excavations; the official reports are as yet unpublished.

<sup>12</sup> Orlandos 1933, 201-202, Figs. 271-272; Lazarides 1968, 116-118, plan 3, pl. 59β-γ.

<sup>13</sup> Given that the position of the two pieces did not permit the taking of accurate measurements, this value is quite possibly imprecise.

<sup>14</sup> Orlandos 1954, 274-276.



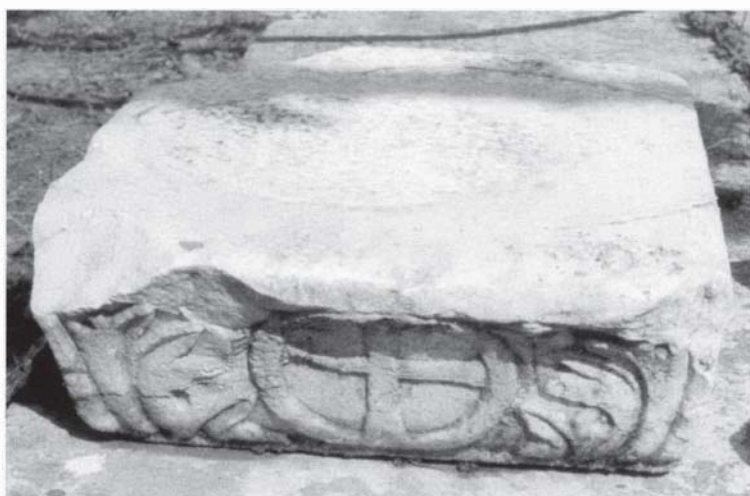


Fig. 17. Panagia Marmariotissa: Cubical impost of white marble.



Fig. 18. Panagia Marmariotissa: Undecorated impost of white marble.

A cubical impost (h: 0.135 m; w: 0.37 m; Fig. 17) of white marble was rescued during the demolition of Marmariotissa.<sup>15</sup> The two main faces are adorned with a simple Greek cross inscribed in a circle and framed by two acanthus half-leaves. Although stylized, the leaves preserve some plasticity. The theme is very common in southern Greece during this period.<sup>16</sup> The impost from Marmariotissa, with the simple cross in place of the chrisma, has close parallels in the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>15</sup> This impost was recently (October 2003) donated to the local Historical and Folk Art Museum of the Municipality of Amaroussion, where it is presently located.

<sup>16</sup> Sodini 1977, 440, with many examples.

<sup>17</sup> A 5<sup>th</sup>-century impost in the Byzantine Museum, Athens: Sklavou Mavroceidi 1999, 54, n. 58. See also an impost capital from Constantinople, with similar half-leaves, dated to the second half of the 6<sup>th</sup> century: Th. Zolt, *Kapitellplastik Konstantinopels vom 4. bis 6. Jahrhundert n. Christ.* Asia Minor Studien 14, Bonn 1994, 40, n. 80, table 19.





Fig. 19. Panagia Marmariotissa:  
Mullion fragment.

Some small fragments from the same church were once to be found in a neighbouring private garden.<sup>18</sup> Among them was a part of an undecorated impost (h: 0.12 m; w: 0.24 m; Fig. 18) of white marble and a piece of a mullion (h: 0.30 m; w: 0.13 m; Fig. 19).

### The spolia at Panagia Nerantziotissa

Much more material can be seen at Panagia Nerantziotissa, a 16<sup>th</sup>-century single-naved church,<sup>19</sup> at the foot of Pelikas hill, close to the aforementioned chapels of Agios Nikolaos and Agios Ioannis, and not far from Marmariotissa. Some traces of foundations near the north wall of the church indicate that it may have been built on the site of pre-existing buildings. Numerous ancient, Early Christian and Byzantine sculpture and other spolia have been reused in the structure.

A white marble impost (h: 0.10 m; l: 0.67 m; Fig. 20) has been reused as a sill for the small window in the bema. Its only visible face is decorated with fleshy acanthus and waterleaves, common motifs in the Athenian architectural sculpture of this period.<sup>20</sup> The plasticity and fine execution follow the classic style of the 5<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>21</sup>

Fragments of mullions and imposts have been reused in several places in the stonework, leaving only small parts of them visible. The small window in the bema also preserves one piece of a white marble mullion (h: 0.50 m; w: 0.18 m; Fig. 21), used as the right window-frame. Part of another mullion has been built into the northeast corner of the church, and the side of an impost is to be found in the upper part of the south wall above the long buttress. A further cubical impost has been reused as part of the window-frame high on the east wall.

Two unfluted monolithic columns<sup>22</sup> support the arch of the reconstructed entrance to the narthex. That on the right (visible h: 2.34 m; Fig. 22) is of whitish

<sup>18</sup> A new building is under construction on this property (Ag. Anargyron and Marathonodromou str.), so the present whereabouts of the spolia is unknown.

<sup>19</sup> Orlandos 1933, 200, Figs. 267-268; P. Lazarides, *AD* 26 (1971) B' 1, 65; P. Lazarides, *AD* 27 (1972) μ' 1, 188; P. Lazarides, *AD* 28 (1973) μ' 1, 58; E. Manolessou, *AD* 34 (1979) B' 1, 116, pl. 27β-γ; M. Lazari, *AD* 35 (1980) B' 1, 98; E. Manolessou, *AD* 38 (1983) μ', 66.

<sup>20</sup> Sodini 1977, 428-434, with many examples.

<sup>21</sup> See a moulding from the Theseion in Frantz 1965, 203, Figs. 20, 22.

<sup>22</sup> Two other columns have been inserted in modern times at the right and the left of the entrance, to decorate it. Unfortunately they have been painted, so the graffiti on one of them is not visible anymore. The part of another white marble column, which was lying at the courtyard, was lost in 1995. These columns are probably of local origin, but the exact provenance is unknown.



Fig. 20. Panagia Nerantziotissa: Impost of white marble.

marble, while that on the left is of blue-white veined marble (visible h: 2.15 m). The limited visibility of these columns does not allow more precise remarks about their shape and other details.

A blue-grey marble impost (h: 0.13 m; w: 0.35 m; Fig. 23) has been reused in a niche over the door to the main nave. The visible face is decorated with a large waterleaf between two half-leaves, an ornament very common in this period.<sup>23</sup> The rather stylised execution may date the impost to the 6<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>24</sup>

A white marble epistyle (h: 0.13 m; l: 1.46 m; Figs 24-25) has been placed on the stone-built post-Byzantine iconostasis. The lower arms of three Greek crosses, between two birds, grow into long stems which end in triple-leaves. Though stylized, the birds still have plasticity and delicate lines. This type of cross is common in this period, with many examples from Attica,<sup>25</sup> and triple-leaves are paralleled in sculpture from Athens<sup>26</sup> and Corinth<sup>27</sup> from the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> century. Similar birds are also known in Athens.<sup>28</sup> Accordingly, the epistyle of Nerantziotissa can be dated to the 6<sup>th</sup> century at the latest.



Fig. 21. Panagia Nerantziotissa: Mullion fragment of white marble.

<sup>23</sup> Sodini 1977, 428-431, with many examples.

<sup>24</sup> See examples from Athens: Bouras 1985-1986, 44-45, Fig. 7; 56, Fig. 36; 59-60, Fig. 41, and from Corinth: Scranton 1957, 111, n. 64-66, 69. The other impost, shown on the left in Fig. 9 seems to be a later copy of an Early Christian theme.

<sup>25</sup> The numerous examples include a 5<sup>th</sup>-century epistyle in the Byzantine Museum, Athens (Sklavou Mavroeidi 1999, 44, n. 38), an epistyle from the Athenian Asklepieion, also probably dated to the 5<sup>th</sup> century (Xyngopoulos 1915, 57, Fig. 6) and other sculptures from Brauron (E. Stikas, *Ανασκαφή παλαιοχριστιανικής βασιλικής παρά την Βραυρώνα*, ΠΑΕ 1951, 68-69, Figs. 21-22) and Agios Ioannis Kynegos on Mount Hymettos (St. Mamaloukos, *Ο πυλώνας της Μονής Αγίου Ιωάννου του Κυνηγού στον Υμηττό*, ΑΡΜΟΣ. Τιμητικός τόμος στον καθηγητή Ν. Κ. Μουτσόπουλο Β', Θεσσαλονίκη 1991, 1112, Fig. 5, with more examples from Attica).

<sup>26</sup> There are examples on the epistyle of the Christian Parthenon, dated to the 5<sup>th</sup> century (Sklavou Mavroeidi 1999, 42, n. 34), on a pilaster capital from the Theseion, dated to the 6<sup>th</sup> century (Frantz 1965, 203, Fig. 21) and on an impost from Asklepieion (Xyngopoulos 1915, 56, Fig. 4).

<sup>27</sup> Scranton 1957, 113, n. 88.

<sup>28</sup> See the bird on a 6<sup>th</sup>-century panel from Athens: Sklavou Mavroeidi 1999, 77, n. 104.



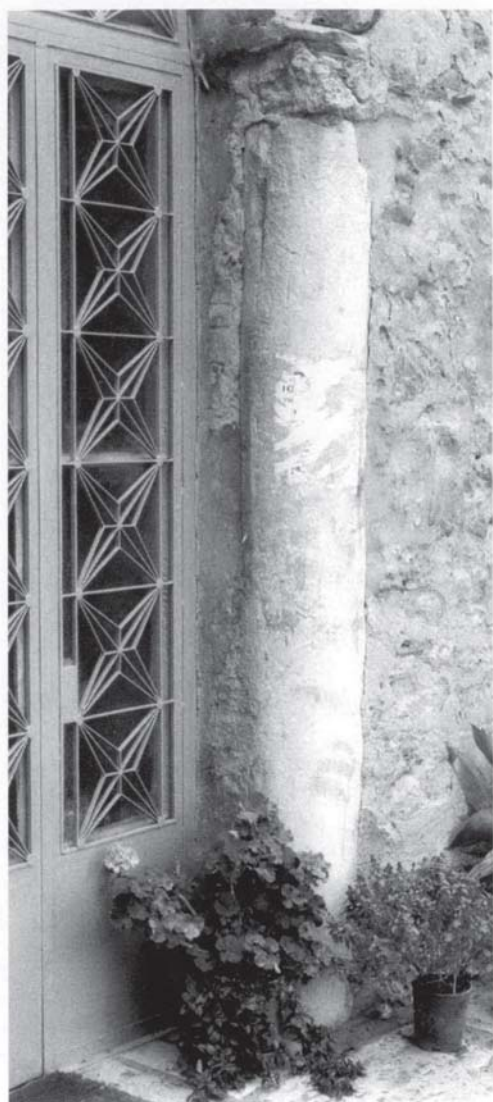


Fig. 22. Panagia Nerantziotissa:  
Reused monolithic column of white  
marble at the entrance to the narthex.

Some other sculptural elements were to be found in the courtyard of Nerantziotissa until the late 1970s. Most of these had been rescued from the surrounding area in the 1920s by the local Ephor of Antiquities, Christos Iliopoulos.<sup>29</sup> Today, only two columns<sup>30</sup> and an epistyle remain. Acanthus and waterleaves with lotus flowers decorate the epistyle of white marble (h: 0.17 m; w: 0.97 m; Fig. 26), the centre of which depicts a circle with a floral element on each side. Within the circle are a square, a rhombus and a smaller square (Fig. 27). The common motifs used, and their stylized execution, date the epistyle to the 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>31</sup> A pilaster-capital from the same collection, now lost, is known from a photograph (Fig. 28).<sup>32</sup> It may come from the same workshop as an almost identical pilaster-capital in the Byzantine Museum in Athens, dated to the early 6<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>33</sup>

### The spolia at Agios Thomas

The post-Byzantine chapel of Agios Thomas in lower Maroussi is the third site where Early Christian material is preserved.<sup>34</sup> The pieces are in the courtyard and it is probable that they were collected from the neighbouring area in the same way as at Nerantziotissa.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Orlandos 1933, 200, Figs. 269-270.

<sup>30</sup> For these columns see n. 21.

<sup>31</sup> For the lotus flowers, a common motif in southern Greece during this period, see Sodini 1977, 437-439, with many examples.

<sup>32</sup> Orlandos 1933, Fig. 269.

<sup>33</sup> Sklavou Mavroeidi 1999, 73, n. 99.

<sup>34</sup> Orlandos 1933, 200.

<sup>35</sup> Iliopoulos was involved in the restoration of the ruined Agios Thomas in 1931.





Fig. 23. Panagia Nerantziotissa: 6<sup>th</sup>-century marble impost with half-leaves at the right corner of the niche. The left impost is later.



Fig. 24. Panagia Nerantziotissa: Marble epistyle on the stone-built post-Byzantine iconostasis.



Fig. 25. Detail of the epistyle in Fig. 24.

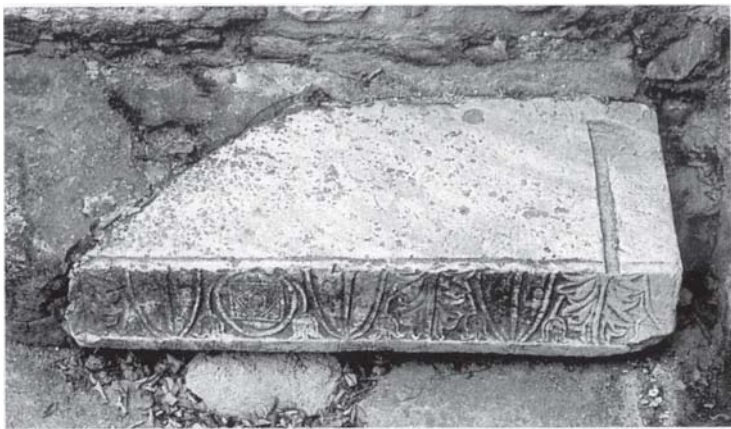


Fig. 26. Epistyle fragment with acanthus and water-leaves with lotus flowers.

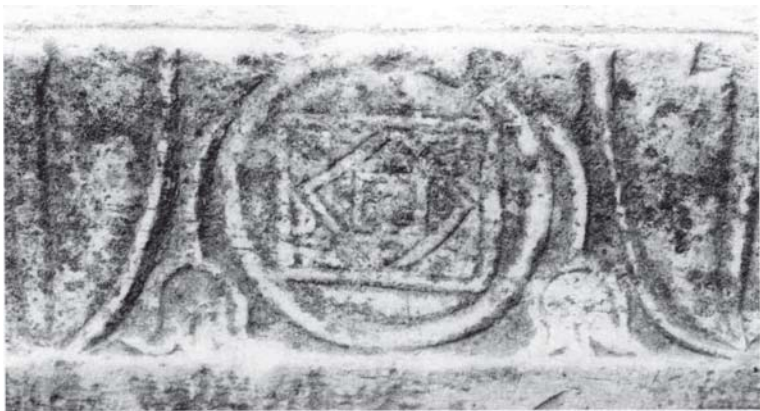


Fig. 27. Panagia Nerantziotissa: Central decoration of the epistyle in Fig. 26.



Fig. 28. Panagia Nerantziotissa: Pilaster capital, formerly in the courtyard of the church, now lost.



Fig. 29. Agios Thomas:  
Capital of a mullion depicting  
a Greek cross between  
water half-leaves.



Fig. 30. Agios Thomas:  
Capital of a mullion depicting  
a lance-shaped element  
framed by stylized acanthus leaves  
and water half-leaves.

A capital of a mullion of white marble (h: 0.165 m; l: 0.54 m; Fig. 29) depicts a Greek cross between water half-leaves on the face. This motif and the shape of the cross were in widespread use in the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>36</sup> Another capital of a mullion of white marble (h: 0.13 m; l: 0.60 m; Fig. 30) has decoration on the front faces which extends partially to the long sides. On one face<sup>37</sup> stylized acanthus leaves and water half-leaves frame a lance-shaped element. This common floral combination suggests a 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> century date,<sup>38</sup> when the lance motif was also in use.<sup>39</sup>

In the courtyard there is also a white marble cubical impost (h: 0.18 m; l: 0.52 m; Fig. 31) decorated on the front face with an incised Latin cross, framed by half-palmettes. The back face depicts the same cross, framed by simple incised half-leaves. The style of the half-palmettes seems to follow the classic style of the 5<sup>th</sup> century. A small impost of unidentifiable stone (h: 0.12 m; l: 0.60 m; Fig. 32) has been reused in the north window of the church. It is decorated on both faces by simple, incised Greek

<sup>36</sup> See n. 23.

<sup>37</sup> The other is partially destroyed.

<sup>38</sup> See Bouras 1985-1986, 53, Fig. 27; 53-54, Fig. 29.

<sup>39</sup> See an impost from the Roman Agora of Athens, dated to the 5<sup>th</sup> century, Sklavou Mavroeiidi 1999, 53, n. 56.



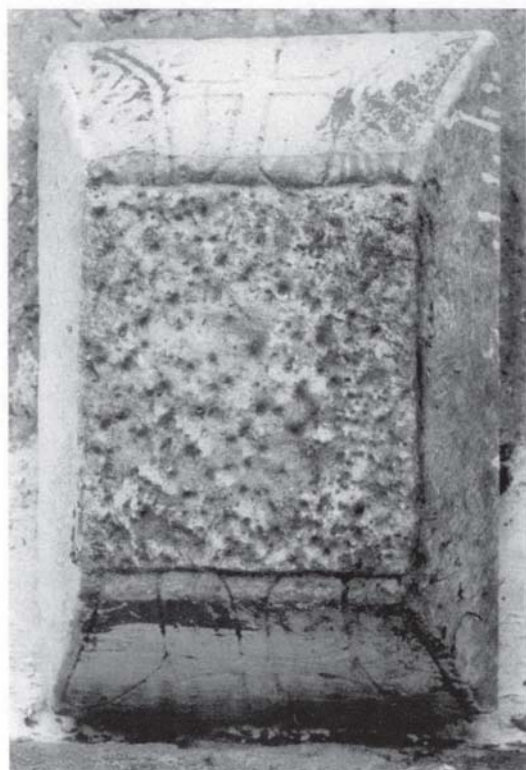


Fig. 31. Agios Thomas: Marble impost decorated with an incised Latin cross framed by half-palmettes.

inherent capital (total h: 0.22 m) is placed over this impost. The colonnette, ending in a torus, has thin flutes which are closely set. Acanthus leaves cover the capital, which is shaped into a basket. The dimensions suggest that this fragment may originate from a small structure, such as an altar.<sup>41</sup> The fluted colonnette and the style of the acanthus leaves belong again to the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> century.

## Conclusion

It is natural to think that the architectural sculpture and members mentioned above<sup>42</sup> are of local origin, as it would have been reasonable to recycle the older material lying to hand nearby; the three sites are from just 50 to 300 m from each other. The distinctive stylistic and iconographic features assign them to 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries.

<sup>40</sup> For a group of imposts and mullion capitals from Corinth decorated with simple crosses of this kind, see Scranton 1957, 114, n. 102.

<sup>41</sup> For Early Christian altars consisting of marble slabs placed on colonnettes, see Orlandos 1954, 444-450.

<sup>42</sup> More Early Christian architectural sculptures are to be found isolated in Maroussi, especially in the area of Pelikas: a small impost, decorated with a Löffelacanthus between two water half-leaves, has been reused over the door of Agios Ioannis Pelikas chapel, near Nerantziotissa. The lintel of the door at the same church is a fluted post from a templon. An unpublished sculptured lintel that was found in 1995 in front of Agios Nikolaos at Pelikas (now at the headquarters of the 1<sup>st</sup> Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities in Athens), could also be assigned to the Early Christian period. An ionic, probably impost, capital is partially visible in the apse of Agia Sotira (Transfiguration of the Saviour) chapel on Kiphissias avenue.

crosses.<sup>40</sup> The close similarity of the Latin crosses suggests a possible connection with the white marble cubical impost.

A column of blue-white veined marble of fine quality (h: 2.24 m) is to be found at the west side of the courtyard. Although this column is partially painted and damaged, the apophyge is recognizable at the preserved end.

In the immediate vicinity of Agios Thomas is the small, ruined chapel of Agios Nikolaos of Chomatianos-Logothetis, built after the Greek War of Independence. Here, also, two Early Christian spolia are built into the west side of the church. The common ornament of a stylized acanthus leaf between two water half-leaves decorates the small impost of white marble (visible h: 0.10 m; visible w: 0.105 m; Fig. 33), which can be dated to the 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> century. The upper part of a colonette with an

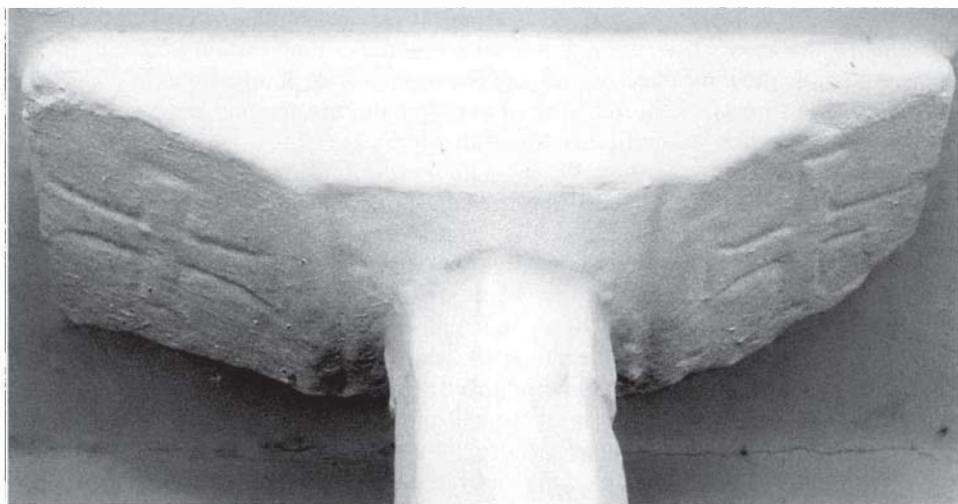


Fig. 32. Agios Thomas: Small impost with Greek crosses on both faces.



Fig. 33. Agios Nikolaos: Colonnnette fragment with an inherent Corinthian capital atop a decorated impost.



Little can be said in the case of Marmariotissa, given that the church has been demolished. An excavation, carried out in 1968 at the east and south of the building, uncovered only a few middle-Byzantine burials and a wall of unknown purpose.<sup>43</sup> In the aisles of this post-Byzantine basilica marble columns and ancient capitals were reused, some of which were of Early Christian origin.

The case of Nerantziotissa is more rewarding. Nikolaos Papahatzis, a commentator on Pausanias, suggested in 1974 that an Early Christian basilica must have existed previously on the site of the post-Byzantine church.<sup>44</sup> His view was based on the sculptural material that he noted as having been reused in the masonry or lying nearby. Nerantziotissa is indeed situated just a few metres from the sanctuary of Artemis Amarysia, at the site of the chapel of Agios Ioannis Pelikas. The importance of the local cult of the deme of Athmonon had a long tradition, so it is not by chance that the name of the sanctuary survived, eventually taking over the whole area, while the name of the deme itself fell into oblivion. It is likely that the Christians would have wanted to penetrate the local centres of paganism during the process of Attica's Christianization. How successfully this was done is apparent from the famous rural sanctuary of Artemis Brauronia, where a basilica complex was erected nearby in the late 5<sup>th</sup> century, when the pagan cult was still very much alive.<sup>45</sup> In a perhaps similar way, a basilica had been built on the site of the later Nerantziotissa, next to the ancient sanctuary, with the intention of competing with paganism. An excavation in the courtyard could shed light on this.<sup>46</sup>

The Early Christian spolia at Agios Thomas must also originate from the neighbouring area, even though no traces of contemporary buildings have yet been found.

It seems that the life of the ancient deme of Athmonon, in the area of modern Maroussi, continued during the Early Christian era. This is quite natural for a fertile rural settlement, which had flourished already during classical antiquity. The number of sculptured spolia proves that there had been building activity in the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries, when at least one basilica was erected. Thus, this area may be safely added to the map of Early Christian Attica.

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<sup>43</sup> Lazarides 1968, 116-118, plan 3, pl. 59γ.

<sup>44</sup> N.D. Papahatzis, *Παυσανίου Ελλάδος Περιήγησις. Αττικά*, Αθήνα 1974, 409-410, n. 1.

<sup>45</sup> Pallas 1986, 49. For the basilica of Brauron see E. Stikas, *Ανασκαφή παλαιοχριστιανικής βασιλικής παρά την Βραύωνα*, *PAE* 1951, 53-76; E. Stikas, *Ανασκαφή παλαιοχριστιανικής βασιλικής παρά την Βραύωνα*, *PAE* 1952, 73-91, and Pallas 1986, 46-49.

<sup>46</sup> A small excavation in 1973 (Lazarides 1973) and the construction of a junction by the south part of the Nerantziotissa courtyard in 1995, did not yield remarkable archaeological finds. But, as already mentioned, some traces of foundations still exist now in the north part of the courtyard, very close to the north wall of the church.



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